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Security Council

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Letter dated 6 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Russian Federation in November 2005 (see annex). This assessment was prepared under my own responsibility following consultations with other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Andrey I. **Denisov**

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Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Russian Federation (November 2005)

Introduction

During the month of November 2005 the Security Council held 11 official meetings and 13 consultations of the whole. A Security Council mission visited Central Africa. A workshop was conducted with the participation of the newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council. The Council adopted five resolutions and five presidential statements. The President also made five statements to the press on behalf of the Council. Furthermore, the President introduced the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

On 2 November, the President briefed the press on the programme of work of the Council for the month.

Africa

Burundi

On 28 November, in informal consultations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Carolyn McAskie, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and informed the Council about the recent developments in the country.

The members of the Council commended the progress in the peace process and in political advancement in Burundi. They stressed the need as a matter of priority for the engagement of the Palipehutu-FNL in the peace process and pointed out other benchmarks and tasks for the Government of Burundi.

The Council members supported observations and recommendations outlined in the report of the Secretary-General and, in particular, suggested an exit strategy for ONUB, involving the gradual disengagement of its military contingent from the country.

On 30 November, the Council adopted resolution 1641 (2005) extending the mandate of ONUB until 15 January 2006.

At that meeting, the Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation of Burundi, Antoinette Batumubwira, made a statement. The members of the Council congratulated the people of Burundi for the successful conduct of the electoral process and the peaceful transfer of authority to an elected government. They encouraged the new Burundian authorities to continue on the course of stability and national reconciliation and to promote social concord in their country.

After the meeting, the President of the Council delivered a statement to the press in which the members of the Council thanked the Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi, the African Union and ONUB for their contribution to the success of the transition. The Council members reiterated their support for ONUB, which had an

important role to play in the consolidation of peace, together with the Burundi partners forum.

Security Council mission to Central Africa

On 2 November, before the departure of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region of Africa, the Council received a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, on the situation in the countries of the region.

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, stress was placed on the task of the Transitional Government in the electoral process in the country, including voter registration and the advancement of electoral law, as well as on security and the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of foreign armed groups in the eastern part of the country. The Under-Secretary-General underscored the need to encourage the Governments of the region to cooperate more with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in finding constructive, pragmatic solutions to the problems posed by the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of foreign armed groups on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 15 November, at its formal meeting, the Council heard a briefing by Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, who led the Security Council mission to Central Africa from 4 to 11 November 2005.

Central African Republic

On 8 November, at informal consultations, the Representative of the Secretary-General, Lamine Cissé, presented the report of the Secretary-General as a follow-up to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 22 July 2005 on the situation in the Central African Republic, and briefed the Council on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country and on the recent developments there.

While noting the progress in the Central African Republic, the members of the Council also recognized that the overall situation in the country remained fragile. They stressed the need for further progress in the peacebuilding process and the importance of a comprehensive approach and joint action by all of the country's development partners.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 29 November, during informal consultations, the Council members heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, on the developments in the country since the adoption of resolution 1633 (2005) and on the African mediatory efforts in the appointment of the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire. The Assistant Secretary-General, noting that the situation in the country continued to be unstable, stressed the need for the prompt appointment of the Head of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and for an expeditious settlement of the dispute concerning the Independent Electoral Commission of Côte d'Ivoire.

On 30 November, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/58), in which it expressed its deep concern at the persistent disagreements among Ivorian parties on the appointment of the Prime Minister, given that the Prime Minister must be designated without any further delay, and encouraged the parties in Côte d'Ivoire to cooperate fully with the High Representative for the elections to settle the dispute concerning the Independent Electoral Commission.

Eritrea and Ethiopia

On 3 November, at the request of the Secretariat, the Council received a briefing from the Secretary-General on the situation in Eritrea and Ethiopia, in particular on reports from the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) concerning the movements of military personnel on both sides of the temporary security zone and irregular activities inside the zone.

After the meeting, the President of the Council delivered a statement to the press in which the members of the Council expressed their deep concern about such reports and strongly urged both countries to show maximum restraint, refrain from any threat or use of force against each other and avoid any action that could lead to an escalation of tension between them. The members of the Council also expressed their deep appreciation for the contribution and dedication of troop-contributing countries to the work of UNMEE, and supported the visit of Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan to UNMEE on 6 to 9 November in his capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations.

On 23 November, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1640 (2005), by which it deplored Eritrea's continued imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMEE and demanded that the Government of Eritrea reverse its decision without further delay or precondition. The Council called on both parties to show maximum restraint and to refrain from any threat or use of force against each other, and demanded that both parties return to the levels of deployment of 16 December 2004. The Council also demanded that Ethiopia accept fully, without further delay, the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and take immediate concrete steps to enable the Commission to demarcate the border completely and promptly.

By its resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to monitor compliance of the parties with the demands and to report to the Council 40 days after the adoption of the resolution.

Liberia

On 11 November, the Security Council heard a briefing in informal consultations, from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the second round of presidential elections in Liberia, which had been held on 8 November 2005.

Following the consultations, the President of the Council delivered a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council welcomed the peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections, and congratulated the Liberian people for demonstrating strong commitment to peace and democracy. The members of the Council stressed that any concerns related to the election should be pursued and

resolved exclusively through peaceful and legal means, and urged the candidates, their parties and all their supporters to respect the final results of the election once they were officially declared.

On 11 November, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1638 (2005), by which it authorized the United Nations Mission in Liberia to apprehend and detain the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, in the event of his return to Liberia, and to transfer him or facilitate his transfer to Sierra Leone for prosecution before the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Somalia

On 9 November, the Security Council received a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, François Lonseny Fall, on the situation in Somalia.

After further discussion among the members, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/54), in which the members of the Council expressed their concern over recent reported military activities and hostilities in Somalia. The Council condemned in the strongest terms the assassination attempt on 6 November 2005 against the Prime Minister, Ali Mohammed Gedi, in Mogadishu. The Council called upon all Somali parties and the leaders of the Transitional Federal Institutions to take immediate concrete steps towards reaching a consensus agreement through inclusive dialogue. The Council condemned the increased inflow of weapons into Somalia and the continual violations of the United Nations arms embargo, and reminded all States of their obligation to comply fully with the measures laid down by resolution 733 (1992). The Council expressed serious concern over the increasing incidents of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 17 November, in informal consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, briefed the Council on the situation in Afghanistan and on the results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections. He underlined, in particular, that the Parliament appeared to be broadly representative of the political and ethnic realities of the Afghan nation and that, with its prospective inauguration, the Bonn process would come to a successful conclusion.

The Under-Secretary-General pointed out that the long-term success and sustainability of the transition of Afghanistan to a democratic, peaceful and stable State would require both strong leadership by the Government of Afghanistan and increased cooperation from the international community across the range of issues involved in the consolidation of the peace process. In that regard, he emphasized the importance of the forthcoming London conference, which was expected to ratify a multi-year compact for Afghanistan aiming to achieve key objectives in the areas of security, governance, development, counter-narcotics, national reconciliation and human rights. The Under-Secretary-General stressed that the United Nations was expected to play an important role in the coordination of international efforts in the implementation of the post-Bonn agenda.

On 23 November, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/56), in which it congratulated the people of Afghanistan on the confirmation of the final results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections. The Council reaffirmed the importance for the international community to maintain a high level of commitment to assisting Afghanistan in addressing its remaining challenges, in particular in the field of security, including fighting terrorist and narcotics threats, governance and development.

The Council supported the central and impartial role of the United Nations in the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan. The Council stressed that violence in any form intended to disrupt the democratic process in Afghanistan would not be tolerated, and in that regard unequivocally condemned all recent attacks in that country.

Middle East peace process

On 29 November, the President addressed on behalf of the Council the participants in the meeting dedicated to the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. He said that the current year had been marked by substantive steps aimed at ensuring progress in the Middle East peace process based on the relative Security Council resolutions. One of the steps was the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank, allowing progress in accordance with the road map towards an ultimate goal of two States living side by side in peace and security.

On 30 November, the Council, in a statement of the President (S/PRST/2005/57), welcomed the successful opening of the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, seen as the first step in the implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on movement and access. The Council commended the efforts undertaken by the Quartet, its Special Envoy and his team to reach the agreement.

On the same day, at an open briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, informed the Council members about the results of his visit to the Middle East.

Iraq

On 8 November, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1637 (2005), by which it decided to extend the mandate of the multinational force for one year, until 31 December 2006, or terminate it earlier if so requested by the Government of Iraq.

In its resolution, the Security Council welcomed the willingness of the multinational force to continue efforts to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq, and looked forward to the day when Iraqi forces would assume full responsibility for the maintenance of security and stability in their country, thus allowing the completion of the multinational force mandate.

The Council also extended until 31 December 2006 the arrangements set up for the depositing of proceeds from export sales of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas into the Development Fund for Iraq, and provided for the monitoring of the Fund by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board.

The resolution outlined the extensive tasks of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in the course of the Iraqi political process.

Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon

On 2 November, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), Terje Roed-Larsen, briefed the Security Council on the progress in settling outstanding issues, such as the disbanding of militias and the demarcation of a border between the two States.

It was confirmed by the Special Envoy during his briefing that the main goals of resolution 1559 (2004) had been met, including the holding of parliamentary elections and the withdrawal of Syrian troops.

On 23 November, the Council issued a statement relating to the hostilities that had taken place on 21 November along the Blue Line between Israel and Lebanon. The Council expressed its deep concern about the incident and regretted the casualties incurred during the border clashes between Hizbollah and the Israel Defense Forces.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 15 November, the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Paddy Ashdown, in his last briefing in that role to the Council, underlined that Bosnia and Herzegovina had done what many had said was impossible just a year earlier. Progress had been real, even miraculous, and due to the fortitude of the people of that country. The country still had a long way to go and would require the wider, constant attention of the international community in general and the European Union in particular. The Peace Implementation Council must continue in its crucial role. An essential part of further progress was the progressive handover of power to Bosnia and Herzegovina politicians.

The High Representative stated that the current moment was the most important in the post-Dayton era. Highlighting recent achievements, he said that the country's defence reform had been virtually completed. Agreement had also been reached on one of the most sensitive issues, namely police reform. Cooperation with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia by the authorities of the Republika Srpska had become concrete, although more needed to be done. Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions would have to start taking full responsibility for the country's future, while the role of the Office of the High Representative would gradually change.

During the discussion, the members of the Council said that they had been pleased to note that in the 10 years since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreements, Bosnia and Herzegovina had made encouraging progress. In the second half of the year, the country had achieved considerable results, in such areas as institution-building, the judiciary system, police reform and national reconciliation. The Office of the High Representative had played a positive role in that regard, which the members of the Council highly appreciated.

On 21 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1639 (2005) authorizing the European Union's stabilization force for a further period of 12 months. The Council reiterated that the primary responsibility for the further successful implementation of the Peace Agreement lay with the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves, and welcomed the tangible signs of that country's progress towards the European Union, in particular the decision by the latter to open negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on a stabilization and association agreement.

Other issues

International Court of Justice

On 7 November, the Council, voting concurrently with the General Assembly, elected Mohamed Bennouna, Thomas Buergenthal, Kenneth Keith, Bernardo Sepulveda Amor and Leonid Skotnikov as members of the International Court of Justice for a term of office beginning on 6 February 2006.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 10 November, following consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/55), condemning the terrorist bombing in Amman, on 9 November, in the strongest terms. The Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constituted one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and reiterated its determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

Annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

On 10 November, on behalf of the Council, the President introduced to the General Assembly the annual report of the Security Council (A/60/2) with a comprehensive description of the Council activities during the reporting period, from 1 August 2004 to 31 July 2005. It showed that the Security Council's working agenda during the reporting period had been full and intense. The range of issues considered by it had remained very wide, covering all major aspects of the maintenance of international peace and security. A total of 229 formal meetings had been held, 195 of which were public. The Council had adopted 61 resolutions and 58 presidential statements.

The President of the Council also stressed in his statement to the General Assembly that the Security Council, in line with the World Summit Outcome, was continuing to adapt its working methods to make the Council more effective, including by having a more open and productive relationship with non-Council members and others. He furthermore underlined the Council's recognition of the crucial contribution of countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions under its authority, as well as its undertaking, including through its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, to involve, as appropriate, troop-contributing countries and other concerned countries more effectively in the consideration of issues relating to peacekeeping operations.

The President furthermore expressed the commitment of the Council to continue to adapt its consultations with non-Council members in other aspects of its activities. For example, the Council's subsidiary bodies dealing with sanctions would continue their dialogue with concerned countries, in particular neighbouring countries, to better assess both the effect of such measures and to work to ensure more effective enforcement of measures such as arms embargoes.